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Labor & Industry NEWS

Volume V, Issue 3

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Lapham Makes It Easy

- **Wade Wilkison**

According to The Kroger Company, Jeff Lapham of the Regulation Bureau has made it easier to self-insure for workers' compensation insurance in Montana than in other western states. Gail Donnell, of Kroger's Western Region Risk Management Group, made Jeff's contributions clear in a letter to the Employment Relations Division (ERD), stating

> "I have been involved in completing self-insurance applications for several states and you will be happy to know that not only is Montana's application one of the easiest to complete, the instructions were very clear and the entire packaging of the application (the folder with all the rules and regulations) made it very convenient to contact the appropriate person for different issues. "I also want you to know that whenever a question arose or I needed help with something, your quick response was and is appreciated."

Jeff is not resting on his laurels, but instead is revising his application materials package for use on the internet. "I hope to have all of these materials further revised and available through the state web page very soon," he commented.

First Annual Lifelong Learning Conference

- **Annette Miller**

Mark your calendars for April 9, 10, and 11, 2001 for attending the first annual Lifelong Learning Conference at the University of Montana in Missoula. This conference brings together several agencies, associations and business interests to create a conference that will be of benefit to a wide range of interests in education, job training, and economic development.

The direction this first conference will take is in discussing the connections between our changing economy, changing technology, the future of education, career exploration, networking and the need for lifelong learning to improve the lives of all Montanans and the economic welfare of the state.

The Lifelong Learning Conference will give participants a sense of "the big picture" of what is going on in the state under WIA, Carl Perkins III, economic development, new education standards and other related initiatives. It will allow participants to learn of agencies and programs they may never have heard of, but need in order to provide service to their customers.

For more information contact Candy Cardwell at 444-2639 or at ccardwell@state.mt.us Information will be posted at our website: mcis.dli.state.mt.us

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Commissioner's Corner

• Pat Haffey

As I gather my thoughts to write my final article for the employee newsletter, I am realizing what a privilege it has been to work with you here at the Department of Labor and Industry. Those words would ring hollow if I hadn't had four years of experience watching you: help people figure out what their rights and responsibilities are when they think they have been discriminated against; get young students excited about their careers; care enough about young, at risk Montanans, to help them plan the path to a constructive future; empathize with someone who just lost their job and needs to file for unemployment insurance; meet with a whole group of logging and mining industry people who have been told the company is closing down; guide a small business person through their first recruitment and selection process; provide statistics to a major corporation that is considering locating in Montana; work with partners in economic development, welfare to work, education, and training, to help welfare moms get good jobs and help businesses hire trained workers; work endless hours to be sure our agency is in good shape at fiscal year end and then turn around and build a budget proposal for the Governor; evaluate jobs to be sure people are paid correctly; evaluate paychecks to be sure SABHRS is paying them right; work through major and seemingly endless struggles in our partnerships with other agencies with a focus on the customer we serve; and patiently explain complicated legal issues to our customers.

I wish you the very best as you continue your service to Montanans.

I have had the unique opportunity to learn about everybody's responsibilities. I have truly marveled at the amount and the quality of work that each of you do – sometimes under less than perfect conditions. I have worried about some of you who were out in the field driving from one Job Service Office or another over icy roads in blizzard conditions; and I have struggled with the amount of hours others of you have spent in all night sessions mediating labor disputes only to get up and drive 400 miles to mediate another labor dispute.

And then I am reminded that the DLI vision didn't come first – the employees did. But the employees live out the vision every day as you focus on customer needs and satisfaction.

I am grateful to have had this unique perspective for four years and I hope I have shared a glimpse of just how good you look from this Commissioner's view. I wish you the very best as you continue your service to Montanans.

High Fives

" I just wanted you to know (Kirt Smith, Tina Smallack & Dan Toney) how much I appreciate all the time and effort you put into planning an staging the Governor's Conference on Workers' Compensation and Safety. The outcome of the conference is evidence of the quality of your committee and the efforts of the various sub-groups that coordinated the conference. After speaking with others that attended the conference, it is apparent that this year's conference was probably the best we've had—both in attendance and in quality."

- John Maloney

Congratulations to Steve Van Tighem of the Great Falls Job Service Workforce Center for winning the Robert D. Fuhrmann Award. Your customer service skills and enthusiasm for your work are unsurpassed.

Congratulations Department of Labor and Industry employees. The Department had the highest percentage of employee donations for agencies with over 500 employees for the State Employee Charitable Giving Campaign.

"The Helena Job Service center was my first Montana contact. What a wonderful introduction to the State! Thanks To all who were so diligent in calling and helping."

- Pam Crewey

Budget Briefing

- **Jeff Harrison**

As we all are, the budgeting staff is readily anticipating the start of Legislative Session on January 3, 2001. The Legislative Session allows us more excitement, challenge, and change than any other time during the biennium. It also means an increased workload and shorter deadlines.

Since last August, the members of the Budget Section, Shaunda Hildebrand, Jeff Harrison, and Lori Carlson, have been assisting Division staff prepare their budgets for submission to the Legislature. That part of the budget preparation process is complete, and the entire Executive Budget is now viewable on the internet at: http://www2.state.mt.us/budget/2003_budget/index.htm

The budget section serves the department as the central information gatherer and disseminator. Working together with division management and fiscal staff the budget section is responsible for tracking the department budget as it assumes its final form through the legislative process.

The Department will be hiring a legislative intern to assist in gathering and disseminating legislative information. The budget section presently is seeking to fill the position with a college student from here in Montana. The position will be full-time and is expected to do a lot of the 'footwork' for the Department.

The budget section will provide all affected personnel with hard or electronic copies of relevant legislation and other documents. We will also track committee meeting schedules and the agendas of committee meetings and floor sessions in both houses. Training has been and will continue to be offered by the budget section in subjects like the Legislative Automated Workflow System (LAWS), the legislative process, and SABHRS budget functions.

The budget section will work proactively to ensure that Department staff will have ample time to prepare for meetings and presentations, have the information they need to make good decisions, and have all the support needed to ensure that the Department's budget and all legislation affecting the Department has a favorable outcome.

Legislative Issues Affecting the Department

- **Kevin Braun**

The Department has five legislative proposals submitted for the upcoming legislative session. The bills concern the following subject matter areas: 1) workers' compensation; 2) unemployment insurance; 3) professional employer organizations; 4) safety; and 5) Workforce Investment Act.

The ***Workers' Compensation*** bill currently has 28 sections dealing with diverse areas such as the workers' compensation assessment, burden of proof, coverage for interstate truck drivers; court jurisdiction, insurer reporting, corporate officer liability, benefit attachment, occupational deafness standards, silicosis benefits, and other items. The bill is a significant piece of legislation for the Department to carry this session. The bill number is LC0414.

The **Unemployment *Insurance bill*** is currently comprised of 14 sections dealing with topics such as attachment of benefits, defining "insured work" in the law, allowing wages to be imputed to different periods, updating the law to reflect telephone claims, and clarifying jurisdiction over benefit charging issues. The bill number is LC0345.

The ***Professional Employer Organizations bill*** has 6 sections which increase the license fee for PEOs, require additional notice to the Department and leased employees, and separate workers' compensation insurance policy numbers for the client companies. The bill number is LC0415.

The ***Safety bill*** has two sections and authorizes the Department to issue citations for Safety Culture Act violations. The bill number is LC0252.

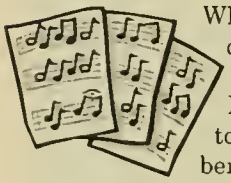
The ***Workforce Investment Act bill*** consists of 12 sections and reflects the change from the Job Training Partnership Act to the current Workforce Investment Act on the federal level. The bill number is LC0253.

All of the bill drafts are available for review on-line. To access the text, go to the Montana home page, then to Government, state agencies, legislative branch, 2001 session, LAWS, and finally to "look up bill information" where you can search for the bill by its LC number.

Information Technology Highlights

Twelve Days of Christmas

- Nan Nail



While I was out Christmas shopping this weekend, I was strolling through the aisles looking at all the displayed gift ideas and an old song kept going through my head. When I wandered through the baby department and saw brightly colored baby size computers, the song took on a whole new meaning. Mainly because, in our society, Santa has been replaced by someone else. Someone who seems to touch our lives on a daily basis. Therefore, get yourself in the proper frame of mind by trying to remember all the items mentioned in the Twelve Days of Christmas...you remember:

On the First Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me:

A Partridge in a pear tree

On the Second Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me:

Two turtledoves and a Partridge in pear tree

Most of us don't have much contact with partridges, other birds, pear trees, leaping lords, etc. Nowadays, your true love gives you his/her chat room nickname. With that in mind, here is the updated techno-version:

On the 12th day of Christmas, my Tech-Rep gave to me

A dozen brand new floppies
11 different mousepads
10 inkjet packets
9 instruction manuals
8 free email boxes
7 software CDs
6 Palm Pilot programs....
5 Million Cords....
4 carpal gel rests
3 cordless mice (?)
2 different keyboards
...and a Microsoft Pentium III

A Microsoft Word Tip

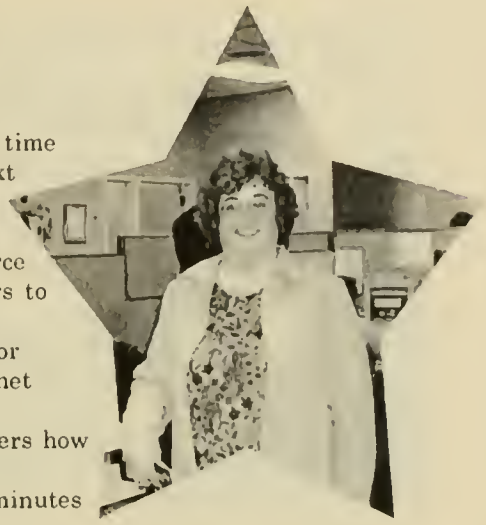
KERNING: One Secret To Great Looking Titles

- Nan Nail

Have you ever been creating a title on a document and have it look strange when you enlarge it? Some character pairs don't look right in large letters, such as in titles. A perfect example: a capital W may not come close enough to a capital A. These problems can be fixed by changing the "kerning." Kerning adjusts the space between *special pairs* of letters. Though it sounds complicated, it's really quite simple:

1. Highlight the two letters that don't look right to you.
2. Click on "Format" in the Menu Bar.
3. Click on "Font" in the drop-down menu.
4. Click the "Character Spacing" tab in the dialog box.
5. Click the drop-down arrow next to "Spacing"
6. Chose "Expanded" or "Condensed" to change the spacing.
   Note: The preview window shows the result of the change.
7. Click "OK."

Long Leaves Job Service



- Tom Antonick

Change. The word that best describes the Helena Job Service Center during the time Lynn Long has been at the helm. Also a word that describes what will happen next in Helena as Lynn has accepted a bureau chief position at UI. Here are just a few of the things that have changed under Lynn's leadership:

- ☆ We have a new Internet labor exchange system, Montana Job Source which allows businesses to list their own openings and job seekers to post their resumes on-line. MJS receives over 21,000 hits a month.
- ☆ There is now a tiered system of service, with 12 computers available for customer use, featuring resume writers, career information and Internet access.
- ☆ There is a training center and classes are available to teach customers how to use computers.
- ☆ There is a video orientation which describes the center in 7-8 minutes viewed by over 30 customers per day.
- ☆ There is a help desk, with a greeter available to answer questions and assist job seekers
- ☆ There is a child's play area, complete with TV/VCR and great cartoons and toys for the kids while Mom and Dad are working on their job search
- ☆ There is an Employer Services Unit which provides Human Resource assistance to businesses, including job analysis, job descriptions, recruitment and selection, policy manuals, employment law questions and provides a resource center especially for businesses
- ☆ There is a cutting-edge one-stop for welfare customers at the Office of Public Assistance where a Job Service staff sees all welfare customers first with the emphasis on Work First, and
- ☆ There is a new group of partners in the tri-county area who all work on Employment and Training issues for customers called the Capital Area Workforce System that Lynn chartered and currently chairs.

We have embraced many changes during the past five years under Lynn's leadership. Good Luck Lynn in your new job!

Workers' Compensation Court

- Mickey Lindgren

In response to suggestions received at the 2000 Governor's Conference, the Workers' Compensation Court has undertaken expansion of its website, linked to a more comprehensive key-wording system now included in decisions of the Court. When the additions are completed, research into rulings of the WCC and of the Montana Supreme Court on workers' compensation issues should be less complicated on-line. Most important will be a streamlined and topically-organized index of rulings on significant issues and hyperlinks to the actual WCC and Supreme Court decisions. At the Governor's Conference, practitioners unanimously supported the Court's website and gave the Court and A+ on operations

Miller's Team Wins Hammer Award

- Tina Hash

Annette Miller and the Career Kit Design Team were recently awarded Vice President Al Gore's Hammer Award by the National Partnership for Reinventing Government for their original work in creating the Career Kit Products.

Miller, supervisor for the Research and Analysis Bureau's Montana Career Resource Network, is one of 30 members of the national team recognized for their outstanding contribution. She worked on the America's Learning Exchange (ALX) portion of the Career Kit. Miller is chair of the content committee and also sits on the planning team committee.

The ALX group developed the resource that connects users to career development, training and education, and unemployment resources important to remain competitive in today's workforce.

Football and John Maloney

• Wade Wilkison

The football analogy in the attached story is particularly appropriate, because John Maloney has been involved in officiating football games for twenty-eight years. John played in Butte and then for Carroll College. When John first moved to Helena he began refereeing high school games, and was inducted into the Montana High School Hall of Fame for his officiating in 1998. "I only referee in the Big Sky Conference now, because of time limitations. The college conference travel takes me all over as it is---Arizona, Portland, Utah, California, Idaho and Washington, as well as Montana."

Referees can be the focus of anger, and John has seen some in his almost three decades of officiating, but he is also known for his fairness. The broadcasters for the University of Montana games regularly talk about John and all his other relatives they have watched play football over the years. John Maloney is typical of the Department of Labor and Industry employees who work hard to contribute to their communities.

Safety Bureau Now At The USF&G Building

• Wade Wilkison

When you move at the wrong time and place in football, you might end up charged with a safety. The Safety Bureau of the Employment Relations Division (ERD) completed its most recent move in November, and according to its Bureau Chief, John Maloney, this move was anything but a penalty. "Ideally ERD should be all in one place. But at our prior location we had no separate meeting space, no space to set up our full safety library, and much of our safety testing equipment had to be stored in boxes. Everyone was tucked into small cubicles, and we often found ourselves tripping over each other."

"Now for our nine staff we have almost doubled our floor space, we have a central printer and file cabinet area, a meeting room where we also house our complete safety library, and enough space for all our safety testing equipment. And finding a parking place is much easier. This move has been a real morale booster."

And while the Safety Bureau is presently two blocks away from some parts of ERD, it is actually right in the same building now---the USF&G Building located on Eleventh Avenue---together with ERD's Human Rights Bureau, the Workers' Compensation Court, the Department of Administration's Tort Claims Unit, and portions of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. This new co-location of agencies might result in some new synthesis in the future, but certainly makes it easier to get certain kinds of service all from one location right now.

As soon as some new but straggling cubicle parts arrive and are installed, the Safety Bureau plans to host an Open House.

Casual For A Cause

• Tom Frisby

The Billings Job Service Workforce Center participates in the city wide "Jeans Day" for charity program on the last Friday of each month. A different non-profit organization is the recipient of the funds raised community wide by this event. The Billings Job Service Workforce Center staff decided to take this project one step further and created our own "Casual For A Cause" business casual days on Fridays. We pay one dollar to wear jeans on the other Fridays of the month. We have coordinated clean-up days, barbecues at lunch and other events to celebrate Fridays. The most important result of "Casual For A Cause" has been the donation of $670 to various organizations. Organizations assisted this year included MADD, MDA, Red Cross, the American Heart Association, Flakesgiving (where a local radio station raises about $15,000 for Thanksgiving dinners for those who have been going through rough times and don't qualify for other types of assistance), the Family Tree Center and we dressed 4 children for the Salvation Army Dress-A-Child program. "Casual For A Cause" has become a standard of our work week and a way to give back to and make our presence felt in another way in our community.

E R C says THANK YOU!

- Laurel Vielle

Since I have been a member of ERC we have had many fun activities and have helped several people; none of which would have been possible without the help and participation of DLI employees. *THANK YOU!*

In September we sponsored a Safety Day Barbeque where with your help we raised over $200. Our annual book swap in October was a success because of all the excellent books employees brought in. The remaining books from the swap were donated to the Montana Youth ChalleNGe and to various nursing homes in the community. We would also like to thank everyone who helped make our Turkey Raffle/50/50/Bake Sale/Silent Auction successful by donating and purchasing baked goodies and silent auction items. ERC raised enough money to donate $200 to a Department employee in need and to Adopt-a Family through the program at the Friendship Center.

Employee of the Month ERC recognizes employees monthly who go above and beyond the call of duty. Nominees since June are: Tom Frisby, Rita Watson, Rene Adams, Debi Peterson, Larry Botham, Lavonne Gilliam, Gary Dusbabek,Todd Gunlikson,Cindy Christenson and Robert Clark. Congratulations: **Tom Frisby, Rene Adams, Lavonne Gilliam, Gary Dusbabek, Todd Gunlikson** and **Robert Clark** for being selected as "Employee of the Month".

High Fives

Congratulations to Bob Campbell of the Office of Legal Services for his recent appointment to the Historical Speakers Bureau. His presentation "Dialogue and Consensus in Writing the Montana Constitution" is part of the Civic Culture Project.

"Thank you (David Frozier), you did an excellent job conducting the UI Rule hearing moving it along in a smooth, efficient manner. And (Mark Cadwallader) what can I say, you are always here when I need you. Thanks for your continual guidance and help. Both of you are great!
- Roy Mulvaney

"I just have to say that I don't know what I would do without Bob Liffring and folks. Bob is once again making it possible for me to get an employee survey put together and implemented. He's great!
- Nan LeFebvre

"When Kathleen stopped at Buttrey's this morning, a woman who has been coming in first thing in the morning and during her lunch hours was ahead of her in the checkout stand, buying a box of candy. She bought the candy, then turned to Kathleen, verified she worked at Job service and said "Would you take this out to all the people in that office. They are the nicest people I've ever worked with. I've told everyone I work with down at DPHHS that those are the nicest people and I can't believe as a group they are so nice!" This is an individual who has worked in the same job for 10 years, is presently working and has been coming in to take the typing test and review state orders to put in for upgrades. High praise from a co-state employee!"
- Bev Bilyeau-Carkeek

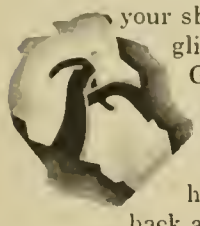
In Your Corner With Safety

- Diane West

Repetitive motion stresses and injuries are increasing within the department. It is essential that we begin to take more proactive aggressive measures to prevent such occupational diseases. Occupational diseases like carpal tunnel and tendononitis can be prevented.

Cumulative trauma disorders (repetitive motion) are injuries which result in damage to muscles and tendons. Slouched shoulders, a bent neck and arms lifted above the shoulders, behind the back or to the side are all unnatural positions that are stressful to the body. These positions bend the body at awkward angles and can result in a cumulative trauma disorder. For example, if your neck is continuously bent while you are working, you can experience pinched muscles. This injury may cause headaches, neck pain and numbness in your shoulder and arm. CTD symptoms usually develop as a result of months or years of strain on the body. Body stresses accumulated over time can actually cause more shoulder, neck and back pain that one traumatic event. By making an effort now, with exercise, neutral positions, rest and good nutrition, you can avoid CTD's later. Fortunately, you can eliminate strain by following a few easy principles.

STAY IN NEUTRAL – When you work in a natural or neutral position, there is less strain on your body. To put your body in a neutral position: Stand up straight, with arms relaxed at your side; put two fingers on your top lip and press your head backwards until you feel a slight stretching. Take your fingers away, keeping the position, and let your head glide forward until it is comfortable and you feel relaxed. To put your shoulders in neutral: Move your shoulders back until you feel them stretching; hold this position, and then allow your shoulders to glide forward naturally. Now your upper body is in a neutral work position.



GIVE YOUR BODY A BREAK – Parts of the body which are used continually become fatigued and may, over time, become injured and sore. Rest breaks are essential to give the body a chance to recover from constant movement. Whenever possible, try to take a few shorter breaks rather than one long break. Take a short walk, climb a set of stairs or do short stretching exercises that will help relax your muscles and improve circulation. The best place to give your neck, shoulders and back a rest is your home. Limit the number of repetitive tasks you do at home. Try to vary your tasks at home and avoid using the same muscles you use at work.

Remember, adjusting workstations and procedures can make your work fit your body. Taking the time to relax your posture and stretch your body can lead to a healthier body and can reduce your chance of injury.

HEART is at the Center of Department Holidays

- **Nan Nail**

The old song says, "Think of your fellow man. Give him and helping hand. Put a little love in your heart." The holidays are traditionally a time of giving and the employees at D.L.I. have answered the call in a multitude of ways. Fund raisers of every kind have been held to help make Christmas a happier time for members of the community and our own employees who may be having a rough time this year.

Deb Buxbaum of I.A.P.E.S. (International Association of Personnel in Employment Security) reports that food collection boxes have been set out. Food collected will be shared with Department families who are in need. Monetary donations are also being accepted.

E.R.C. (Employee's Resource Committee) has adopted a family of four and used fundraiser proceeds to make their Christmas merry.

The U.I. Division is holding their annual Christmas Auction of donated items to raise funds to fill the wish list of a family of 10! They also contribute put together food items for the family.

Employment Relations Division also held their annual Christmas Auction of donated items to adopt a family for the Holidays. In addition, they have a Christmas wish tree containing tags for items needed by children at Shodair.

All these holiday-oriented activities are in addition to the year-round generosity of D.L.I. staff. When the call goes out that someone is in need of sick leave, it is answered in a heartbeat by co-workers and, often, by strangers within the department. ERC and the UI Help Fund are on the job 12 months of the year providing assistance to those in need. Not all acts of generosity are the result of organized committees. Staff has unselfishly responded to the needs of co-workers caught unaware by crisis and personal loss. They have provided personal assistance, donations of money, clothing and household items when needed. Without a doubt, the true spirit of the holidays is

Personnel Changes

October - November

LEAVING DLI during this period were:
Kris Anderson, UI Benefits
Clarice Beck, WC Court
David Butler, Havre JS
Kelly Chapman, JS Administration
Michael Cohan, Miles City JS
Katherine Dalton, Helena JS
Terri Luzovich, Human Rights
Diane Manos, Bozeman JS
Alan Miller, Human Rights
Marlene Mills, Great Falls JS
Chris Noland, Fiscal Support
Joy Parrilla, Missoula JS
Carl Seelhoff, Bozeman JS
Wendy Sturn, Personnel Bureau

NEW EMPLOYEES in Permanent Positions:
Donna Arvidson, Community Services
Chris Benham, Missoula JS
Karl DuBois, Fiscal Support - Mail
Debra Freeberg, Libby JS
Karen Greathouse, Livingston JS
Donald Griffith, Missoula JS
Tony Harrah, JS R&A
Patricia Hart, Kalispell JS
Jim Keil, WC Claims Assistance
Renee McDaniel, Helena JS
Beverly Mills, JS Administration
Tammy Prout, Fiscal Support
Karen Ralph, Anaconda JS
Jue Sing, WC Claims Assistance
Julie Strong, UI Benefits
Rose Villa, Missoula JS

PROMOTIONS
Susan Anderson fr R&A to Human Rights
Richard Clautu, fr Helena JS to Hamilton JS
Sheryal Strong fr UI Helena Phone to UI Benefits

The ***Montana Department of Labor and Industry's News*** is published quarterly for the department's employees.

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Contact Diane at 444-6845, if you have comments on this issue. We will accept your stories and photos at anytime.

Your input is valued, and we hope to hear from you soon!

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